



ACHF financial narrative report

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Submitted by Brenda Raney, Director of Government Relations

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The Science Museum of Minnesota is pleased for this opportunity to submit an updated narrative review of the work we've done with the generous allocation of \$500,000 for fiscal year 2012 from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of the Minnesota Legacy Amendment.

The main contact for the museum's Legacy programming is Brenda Raney. Brenda's contact information can be found in the header of this report. The museum's website address is [www.smm.org](http://www.smm.org) and the site is in compliance with all web requirements set forth in the current Legacy legislation. Our fiscal agent for Legacy projects is the Minnesota Department of Administration. A current museum Board of Directors list is attached to this report. The Science Museum of Minnesota is using these funds on three separate projects. Descriptions of each project's scope, financials and outcomes are included in this report.

Our first project continues efforts we began with last biennium's Legacy funding for our American Indian collections project. We made a \$166,103 installment payment on December 16, 2011 towards our purchase of a collection of local and regional American Indian artifacts. We closed on this purchase agreement in January 2010 and, through Legacy funds, are currently ahead of our payment schedule. While we are not using Legacy funds for any other part of this project during this fiscal year, we are continuing other activity. We will use privately donated funds designated to our American Indian collections work to assemble a team of museum staff to begin planning an exhibition featuring this collection, among other American Indian artifacts we have in our collection and from elsewhere. This team will meet over this winter in consideration of the travel schedule of our Curator who is currently in Italy on a fellowship funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. This fellowship makes possible the study of a large collection of objects, contemporary to our own collections, which were collected by an Italian visitor to Minnesota in 1823 and still remain in Italy. Knowledge gained from this research will inform our own exhibition as well as potentially provide additional artifacts on loan, bringing them back to Minnesota for the first time in nearly 200 years. This project is expected to continue next fiscal year with additional Legacy funds supporting the development of the exhibition and the completion of the collection purchase. As that work continues, appropriate outcomes and measures for achieving them will be developed.

Our second project, Suitcase Science, continues to prioritize public outreach across the state of Minnesota. Suitcase Science is a live theater show that is a culmination of workshops to which community members brought objects meaningful to them and worked with museum theater staff to develop a play telling the stories of both science and cultural heritage from the objects. Workshops were held with community members in Duluth, Mankato, Moorhead, Rochester, Saint Cloud and the Twin Cities during the fall of 2010. Museum staff then took the stories collected at the workshops and

developed a community-specific show featuring objects from that community and covering a variety of scientific disciplines interpreted with a cultural heritage perspective. Over 4,600 visitors to the museum have seen the show in daily performances since September 2011, while close to 100 more saw it on a mini-tour to three metro sites in November and December. A larger tour to greater Minnesota locations is planned for spring 2012. Program evaluation revealed over 80% of viewers found the theater show both interesting and enjoyable. The same percentage also reported seeing a connection linking them personally to the content of the show, regardless of their participation in a local workshop. From September to December \$29,608 has been spent on this project which supports two full time equivalency positions.

Our third project begins the process of enhancing our programs for students and teachers in order to increase their value to these audiences. Our plans for this project are informed by conversations with schools about how we can meet their current and future needs most effectively and cost efficiently. To date we have embarked on:

- Planning a systematic review of our programs and exhibitions using a curriculum topic study approach that considers both Minnesota science and math standards, as well as social studies, art and humanities standards;
- Creating of a set of videos to help orient chaperones and teachers to what to expect on an SMM field trip. The goal is to maximize the experience for students, especially by addressing needs of children and adults who are new to this country and perhaps could benefit from additional explanation of norms and behavior to expect during their visit. We are hoping to find an opportunity to partner on this objective with the Minnesota Historical Society as a means to improve field trips to both locations;
- Assembling a teacher advisory board with current and former educators from metro and greater Minnesota to provide expert input and guidance for all facets of this project.

Due to the government shutdown adjusting internal schedules, work began in earnest on this project in November 2011. Since then \$359 has been spent. When operating at full capacity, three FTE's will be supported by this project. We expect to begin using teacher surveys and audience comparison data to assess the effectiveness of these pilots once they are up and running, later in this fiscal year.

It is our pleasure to submit these financial and narrative reports. We're proud of the work we have completed so far with the Legacy amendment funds and are looking forward to continuing it. The museum is happy to answer any additional questions you have about this work and would be thrilled to show you in person what is discussed in this report. Please contact Brenda Raney directly for any additional information you need.